

A bill for an act

relating to energy; providing rights to low-income customers of delivered home heating fuel vendors; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 325E.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[325E.0271] LOW-INCOME CUSTOMER RIGHTS; DELIVERED HEATING FUEL.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For the purpose of this section, the terms defined in this subdivision have the meanings given them.

(a) "Low-income customer" means a person receiving assistance from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) who contracts with a vendor for the delivery of liquid propane gas, or number one or number two fuel oil for residential heating purposes.

(b) "Vendor" means a dealer or distributor of liquid propane gas, or number one or number two fuel oil. Vendor includes an agent or affiliate of the dealer or distributor.

Subd. 2. **Payment plans and purchasing options.** (a) Vendors who offer budget billing or other time-payment plans and keep-fill, prebuy, and summer-fill programs must offer these programs to all customers, including low-income customers.

(b) If a low-income customer requesting a delivery has an outstanding balance with a current vendor, the vendor shall divide any LIHEAP or other customer payment so that 75 percent of the payment is applied to the current delivery and 25 percent is applied to past due balances.

Subd. 3. **Cold weather deliveries.** From October 15 to April 15, a vendor must continue to provide minimum fuel deliveries to all existing customers who are not

2.1 delinquent on an outstanding home heating fuel bill with the vendor as of October 15.  
2.2 A minimum fuel delivery for 250- to 500-gallon tanks is 150 gallons. A minimum fuel  
2.3 delivery for 500- to 1,000-gallon tanks is 300 gallons. No minimum delivery fees shall  
2.4 be charged to a customer. If the customer cannot make the full payment at the time of a  
2.5 delivery required by this subdivision, the customer must enter into and make reasonably  
2.6 timely payments under a mutually acceptable payment agreement with the vendor that  
2.7 is based on the financial resources and circumstances of the household; provided that, a  
2.8 vendor may not require a customer to pay more than ten percent of the household income  
2.9 toward current and past bills. Interest may not be charged a customer who makes timely  
2.10 monthly payments under a payment agreement.